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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit was created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966 and was extended thereafter under Assembly resolutions 2735 A (XXV) of 17 December 1970 and 2924 B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972. By its resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, the Assembly decided to establish the Joint Inspection Unit as a standing subsidiary organ and approved the statute of the Unit, with effect from 1 January 1978. Under the terms of article 1, paragraph 2, of the statute, the Unit is responsible to the General Assembly, and similarly, to the competent legislative organs of the participating organizations that accept the statute.

2. The Unit is composed of 11 Inspectors appointed by the General Assembly on the basis of their special experience in national or international administrative and financial matters, including management questions, and with due regard to the principles of equitable geographical distribution and reasonable rotation. Inspectors serve in their personal capacity and are appointed for a term of five years, renewable for one term.

3. The Inspectors have the broadest powers of investigation in all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of services and the proper use of funds and, to those ends, make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations. They are mandated to provide an independent view through inspections and evaluations aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination among organizations. In pursuance of its objectives of enhancing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system, the Unit is required to satisfy itself that the activities undertaken by the organizations are carried out in the most economical manner and that optimum use is made of the resources available for carrying out those activities. The Unit may issue reports, notes and confidential letters. Reports are addressed to one or more organizations, or to all the organizations when the subject is of interest to the system as a whole, for consideration by the competent legislative organs of the organizations concerned. Notes and confidential letters are submitted to executive heads for their own use as they may decide. The Unit submits annual reports to the General Assembly and to the competent organs of the participating organizations.

4. The Unit is assisted by an Executive Secretary and by such staff as may be authorized in the budget of the Unit. The budget is included in the regular budget of the United Nations and its expenditures are shared by the participating organizations.

5. The present report, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2002, is the thirty-fourth of its kind prepared by the Unit since its establishment.

6. The request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 7 of its resolution 56/279 of 27 March 2002, regarding the monitoring of development and consolidation of common services at Geneva, is addressed in paragraphs 23 to 26 of the present report. The Unit will respond separately to the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 11 of its resolution 57/284 A of 20 December 2002 for the Unit to provide detailed information on the new procedure for handling comments of the participating organizations on its findings and recommendations, together with the comments of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Chapter II
General information

A. Participating organizations

7. In accordance with its statute, the Joint Inspection Unit performs its functions with respect to the United Nations, including its programmes, funds and offices,[1] and with respect to the following organizations that have accepted its statute in accordance with its provisions:

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

World Health Organization (WHO)

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

B. Composition

8. The composition of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2002 was as follows. The member's term of office expires (or expired) on 31 December of the year indicated in parentheses.

Sumihiro Kuyama (Japan), Chairman (2004)

Armando Duque González (Colombia), Vice-Chairman (2003)

Doris Bertrand (Austria) (2005)

Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria) (2002)

Ion Gorita (Romania) (2005)

Homero L. Hernández Sánchez (Dominican Republic) (2002)

Eduard Kudryavtsev (Russian Federation) (2002)

Francesco Mezzalama (Italy) (2002)

Wolfgang Münch (Germany) (2005)

Khalil I. Othman (Jordan) (2002)

Louis-Dominique Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) (2005)

9. At its 98th plenary meeting, on 1 May 2002, the General Assembly appointed Even Fontaine Ortiz (Cuba), Tang Guangting (China), Victor Vislykh (Russian Federation), Deborah Wynes (United States of America) and Muhammad Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania) for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2003 and expiring on 31 December 2007.

10. In accordance with article 18 of its statute, which provides that the Unit shall elect each year from among the Inspectors a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman, the Unit elected Armando Duque González (Colombia) as Chairman and Ion Gorita (Romania) as Vice-Chairman for the calendar year 2003.

C. Human and financial resources

11. During the reporting period, the Joint Inspection Unit was assisted by a secretariat that consisted of an Executive Secretary (D-2), seven research officers (2 P-5, 3 P-4 and 2 P-3), an information technology officer (P-3), four research assistants (1 G-7 and 3 G-6), and seven other General Service staff. The year under review has confirmed that the reallocation of staff resources sought by the Unit through its budget submission in 2002-2003, combined with the reorganization of tasks assigned to General Service staff, has led to the strengthening of its research capacity, as demonstrated by the output of the Unit in 2002 (see annex).

12. As indicated in the previous year's annual report, the amount appropriated for the biennium 2002-2003 ($8,155,100) was very close to the appropriation for the biennium 2000-2001.[2] Likewise, the amount requested for the biennium 2004-2005 ($8,369,000) remains the same as the appropriation for 2002-2003, adjusted to account for the different costing factors applicable.

Chapter III
Summary of main activities

A. Programme of work

13. During the period under consideration, the Joint Inspection Unit pursued the series of comprehensive reviews of the administration and management of its participating organizations that it initiated in 1999.[3] Thus, after completing such reviews in respect of ILO, UNESCO, ITU and WHO in previous years, it completed a report on the administration and management of FAO in 2002, and started a similar review in respect of UNIDO.

14. Twelve reports were issued during 2002, one addressed to a single organization (FAO), eight dealing with system-wide issues and three with several organizations. As for the three notes issued in 2002, they related to a number of selected organizations in the system. The Unit intends to maintain a similar mix of system-wide, several-organizations and single-organization reports in the future. The former types of reports allow it fully to play its role as a catalyst for the comparison and dissemination of best managerial, administrative and programming practices in the system as a whole, while the latter lends itself to a more detailed analysis of specific inefficiencies and their possible remedies in individual organizations.

B. Interactions

1. Member States and legislative organs

15. The Joint Inspection Unit has pursued its efforts to enhance its interactions with representatives of Member States, meeting them both individually and as groups, during the preparation of reports and/or during their presentation to the legislative organs. In addition, the Unit organized a briefing session at Geneva in November 2002, during which it briefed the representatives of some 40 Member States from various groups and regions. Briefing sessions with two groups of Member States were also held at Montreal in July 2002 on the occasion of a mission by representatives of the Unit to the headquarters of ICAO.

2. Participating organizations

16. In addition to discussions on the handling/follow-up procedures of Joint Inspection Unit reports described in paragraph 20 below, meetings were also held by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Inspectors and the Executive Secretary with a number of executive heads of participating organizations and other high-level officials of the United Nations system in order to exchange views on issues of common interest and in connection with the preparation of reports. When appropriate and possible, Inspectors also introduced those reports that were taken up by the legislative organs of the participating organizations and took part in discussion of these reports.

17. In addition, the Chairman, some of the Inspectors and the Executive Secretary attended the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and participated in the meetings of the Fifth Committee and in informal consultations on agenda items

concerning the Unit. On 20 December 2002, the General Assembly adopted two substantive resolutions on the Unit (resolutions 57/284 A and B).

3. Oversight bodies

18. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/245, the Joint Inspection Unit has continued to cooperate and coordinate with other external and internal oversight bodies of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring greater synergy and mutual complementarities with them. This has led to close contacts not only with the Office of Internal Oversight Services, but also with internal and external oversight bodies of other organizations.

19. As in previous years, the Unit participated in the fifth tripartite oversight coordination meeting between the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, held in New York on 28 June 2002. This annual meeting has become a regular and valued channel of communication and interaction between the three parties, and the Unit will attempt to plan similar meetings with the representatives of external and internal oversight bodies when visiting various locations where other United Nations organizations are headquartered. Such a meeting was held in Paris in October 2002 between representatives of the Unit, the External Auditor of UNESCO and the organization's Internal Oversight Service.

C. Follow-up of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations

20. During the reporting period, the Joint Inspection Unit continued its efforts towards the establishment of a follow-up system that would allow a systematic tracking of the status of implementation of its recommendations. Thus, in 2002, it concluded successful discussions and reached agreements on the handling/follow-up of its reports with the secretariats of six additional organizations (FAO, WFP, WMO, UNESCO, ICAO and WIPO). Five of these agreements were subsequently endorsed by the relevant legislative organs, and the sixth is scheduled to be submitted to the legislative organ concerned in 2003. Dialogue continued in 2002 with the remaining organizations with which final agreement on the handling/follow-up procedure has yet to be reached, and the matter will be actively pursued and it is hoped completed during 2003.

21. The Unit must now start not only implementing the provisions contained in the procedures adopted by the participating organizations but also monitoring compliance by the secretariats of these organizations. It will do so through two matrices that it has developed for, respectively, tracking steps up to the consideration of the Unit's reports by legislative organs and following up on the actual implementation of approved/accepted recommendations. The matrices are now operational, but the accuracy and usefulness of the information filled into the second matrix (recording action to implement approved/accepted recommendations) will depend to a great extent on the quality of cooperation received from the secretariats of participating organizations. The Unit notes in this regard the commendable efforts made by the secretariat of WHO to use this second matrix to present to the Executive Board of that organization at its one hundred and eleventh session actions taken to implement the recommendations of a previous Unit report on the administration and management at WHO.[4] The comprehensive and detailed

character of the information provided by WHO in this chart, including with regard to the expected impact of implementation of the recommendations, could usefully be emulated by other organizations.

22. At the same time, and as noted in the previous annual report,[5] specific actions by legislative organs of participating organizations on recommendations included in the reports of the Unit remain the most effective way to ensure that these recommendations are implemented. Although general statements, simply taking notes of the reports are still too often favoured over such specific endorsement, some progress was noted in 2002, with several legislative organs expressly voicing support for individual recommendations contained in the Unit's reports. In addition, the Unit hopes that through extensive dialogue with the secretariats of relevant organizations, a common understanding and concurring positions can be developed on many issues addressed in its reports, thus encouraging the secretariats to take ownership of the recommendations and actively seek their implementation. In this regard, the Unit considers as a very positive precedent the inter-agency consultations held in December 2002 on the follow-up to its report on support costs.[6]

23. After examining the report of the Unit on the United Nations system common services at Geneva, part II (A/55/856/Add.1), the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/279, requested the Unit to continue monitoring progress in the development and consolidation of common services at Geneva and other duty stations, and to report thereon at its fifty-eighth session in the context of this annual report. The following paragraphs relate to that request.

24. The Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva has reported that a three-tier structure for common services, recommended by the Secretary-General in his report on common services at Geneva (A/56/417), has been established.[7] The Management Ownership Committee, comprising the heads of all Geneva-based agencies, under the Chairmanship of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, provides strategic direction and high-level support for all common service initiatives. The Task Force on Common Services, supported by various technical working groups, has, over the past year, been instrumental in the realization of developments in the areas of travel, the provision of electricity and archives and records management.

25. The United Nations Office at Geneva has also informed the Unit that, in 2002, the Task Force negotiated with airline companies to obtain discounted airfares. A second round of negotiations was held in January 2003. New rates effective in April 2003 are offered by a total of 20 air companies, with a further 2 under discussion, to 10 Geneva-based organizations. Four organizations, namely, WHO, WMO, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO and the United Nations, including UNHCR, made a joint bid for the provision of travel agent services, which has resulted in a very favourable and innovative pricing model being offered by the selected contractor. This also becomes effective in April 2003. In addition, the local electricity provider has agreed to maintain preferential terms negotiated in 2002 for Geneva-based organizations.

26. Further plans for the current year include a joint bidding process by Geneva-based organizations for the provision of postal services, including international mail, courier service and part of the Swiss mail. The Task Force is currently reviewing the merits of a joint approach for banking services, including both private and corporate

services. An initiative has also been launched with a view to harmonizing security policies among the Geneva-based organizations and will explore means to create closer coordination, sharing of resources, equipment and skills and agree on minimum security standards.

27. The Secretary-General, in his report on common services (A/57/176), stated that at United Nations Headquarters, the Task Force on Common Services, originally scheduled to be phased out in August 2002, has been extended until August 2003. Four of the initial 11 technical working groups continue to be operational, namely, archives and records management, procurement services, personnel services and travel and transport services.

28. The Secretary-General also reported that at the United Nations Office at Nairobi an Inter-Agency Administrative Coordination Committee has been established, co-chaired by the Office and UNDP, and composed of representatives of the funds and programmes and the specialized agencies.

29. In its fourth report on the programme budget for 2002-2003, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions encouraged greater cooperation in particular in the areas of travel and the development of procurement-dedicated web sites and agreed to revert to the matter of common services in the context of its consideration of section 27D, Office of Central Support Services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/57/7/Add.3, para. 5).

30. Finally, in 2002, the Unit issued a report on common and joint services of United Nations organizations at Vienna, which describes the situation at that duty station extensively, and makes detailed recommendations for the rationalization, strengthening and development of common services.[8]

Notes

[1] Including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Food Programme (WFP), which is a subsidiary body of FAO, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/57/34), para. 12.

[3] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/56/34) and ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/57/34).

[4] EB111/24.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 34* (A/57/34), para. 23.

[6] See A/57/442 on support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2002/3).

[7] United Nations Office at Geneva, 2002 report of the Director-General, entitled "On the Road to Reform".

[8] JIU/REP/2002/12.

Annex

Joint Inspection Unit reports and notes issued during the reporting period

Reports

JIU/REP/2002/1	Involvement of civil society organizations other than NGOs and the private sector in technical cooperation activities: experiences and prospects of the United Nations system (A/57/118)
JIU/REP/2002/2	The results approach in the United Nations: implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/372 and Corr.1)
JIU/REP/2002/3	Support costs related to extrabudgetary activities in organizations of the United Nations system (A/57/442)
JIU/REP/2002/4	Extension of water-related technical cooperation projects to end-beneficiaries: bridging the gap between the normative and the operational in the United Nations system (case studies in two African countries) (A/57/497)
JIU/REP/2002/5	Reform of administration of justice in the United Nations system: options for higher recourse instances (A/57/441)
JIU/REP/2002/6	United Nations system revenue-producing activities (A/57/707)
JIU/REP/2002/7	Management audit review of outsourcing in the United Nations, and United Nations Funds and Programmes
JIU/REP/2002/8	Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
JIU/REP/2002/9	Managing information in the United Nations system organizations: management information systems
JIU/REP/2002/10	Evaluation of United Nations System response in East Timor: coordination and effectiveness
JIU/REP/2002/11	Implementation of multilingualism in the United Nations system
JIU/REP/2002/12	Common and Joint Services of United Nations system organizations at Vienna

Notes

JIU/NOTE/2002/1	Senior-level appointments in the United Nations specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency
JIU/NOTE/2002/2	United Nations system regional presence and coordination: the case of Arab countries
JIU/NOTE/2002/3	The option of a lump-sum payment as an alternative to the traditional shipment entitlements of staff: An overview of selected United Nations system organizations

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